



# EBT WIRELESS PROJECT

## August 2010 Newsletter



DHS

### From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Total Transactions	EBT Transactions	Total Sales on Wireless
<b>2009 Total: 32,508</b>	<b>6009 (18.5%)</b>	<b>\$834,298</b>
<b>2010 Totals:</b>		
January 243	38 (15.6%)	\$13,274
February 265	29 (10.9%)	\$15,027
March 401	52 (12.9%)	\$16,410
April 887	61 (6.88%)	\$41,118
May 4534	534 (11.7%)	\$150,934
June 4559	690 (15.1%)	\$104,353
July 5051	1427 (28.3%)	\$ 79,792
YTD		
<b>2010 Total 15,940</b>	<b>2,831 (17.8%)</b>	<b>\$420,908</b>

#### July 2010 Facts:

Total sales for July this year were greater than July 2009 (\$79,792 compared to \$74,445). This is an overall increase of 7%. For this July, there were a total of 5,051 wireless transactions. A year ago, there were 4,299 transactions.

In July 2010, there were 161,149 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$45,296,760 in benefits were issued in July to these families.

I was asked to speak at the Tri-Regional SNAP Conference in South Carolina last week about the success of the Wireless EBT Project. Several states want to begin a farmers market program similar to Iowa's. I have to say what a privilege it is to work with all of you on this very successful program. The Wireless EBT Project is successful due to the dedication of each and every one of you!

#### Here are other interesting facts regarding July sales:

There were 131 farmers who had sales. 118 of those farmers had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest number of EBT transactions were:

- ❖ Country Market (168) Sioux City
- ❖ Grubby's Kettle Korn (68) Oskaloosa
- ❖ Iowa Orchard (67) Urbandale
- ❖ Scavo's Market (57) Des Moines
- ❖ Palm Tree Pat Garden Fresh Produce (53) Davenport
- ❖ R & R Farms (51) Clinton
- ❖ Rinehart's Family Farm (45) Boone
- ❖ Story Book Orchard (44) Story City
- ❖ Westrum Produce (36) Stratford
- ❖ Circle M Produce (35) Prole
- ❖ Circle W Acres (31) Belle Plaine

Congratulations to Tammy Donovan - Country Market for having the highest number of EBT transactions and for having the highest EBT sales. Great job!

## Wonderful produce grown in Iowa!



## No July Newsletter

I apologize that there was no July Newsletter. We are very short staffed and time got away from us. We hope to continue to do a monthly newsletter.

## Reimbursements

It has come to the attention of DHS that the farmer reimbursements for July have not been completed again this month by the 15<sup>th</sup>. Tracy is diligently working with the contractor to find a solution to this issue. Sorry for any inconvenience that this is causing you and please know that we are addressing this issue!

## Farmer Responsibilities

We have noticed that some of our farmers are not having any sales. It is very important that if you are having issues with your machine that you call and report it. Please call TMS Tech Support at 1-888-848-6825. If you run into problems or they can't help you, please give either Kim or Tracy a call immediately. DHS does not want to pay monthly fees for equipment that does not work. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Duplicate Transactions

We have received several phone calls from farmers concerning duplicate transactions. When you run a transaction on your wireless machine and you are unsure whether it went or not here are a couple of things that you need to do.

- **First** look at the receipt and see if the transaction says APP or approved.
- If you are still unsure, then please **STOP** and batch out your wireless machine.
- If the transaction is **not** on your batch report then you will need to re-run the transaction.

We have seen examples of farmers just re-running the transactions and therefore charging the customers twice. In order to fix the double charge, please call TMS at 1-888-848-6825 and they will work with you to reverse the extra charge.

## PCI Compliancy Fee (VeriFone wireless machines)

Just a reminder to the farmers that have the VeriFone wireless machines through First National Merchant Solutions. The leading card associations, VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS and DISCOVER have adopted comprehensive requirements for safeguarding cardholder data. Effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, First National Merchant Solutions began charging Payment Card Industry (PCI) fees.

First National Merchant Solutions informed clients of this change on their monthly statements. The PCI fee will be \$59.00 per year or \$4.95 a month. It is imperative that each of you complete the PCI survey to insure that you are compliant. If the survey is not completed, you will see non-compliance fees on your monthly statements. Jason Butts and Chris Shanahan from First National have tried to call each of you to aid you in completing the survey. The survey needs to be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup>, if you haven't completed the survey please get in touch with them as soon as possible.

**DHS cannot reimburse you for this fee as it is not a direct cost for SNAP EBT.** Federal rules prohibit DHS from paying this type of expense.

The PCI is a cost of doing business so please copy/keep your statements so that you can claim this cost on your income taxes.

## Customer Survey postcards

DHS is receiving customer survey postcards back daily. Thanks so much for placing these in your customer's sacks. If you are running low, please give Kim Jones a call and she will put some more in the mail to you.

## Ordering Supplies – Effective Immediately

Kim Jones will be mailing you supplies. If you need paper, battery, or cords, give Kim a call. Her email is [kjones4@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:kjones4@dhs.state.ia.us) or phone at 515-281-5410.

## Upcoming Events

**Des Moines Downtown Winter Season Markets** – Des Moines is holding their indoor/outdoor markets at Capital Square/Nollen Plaza; the same as previous years. The dates are November 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>. The Friday lunch market will be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Saturday the hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you would like to sign up to be a vendor at the winter market please e-mail Kelly Foss at [KFoss@downtowndesmoines.com](mailto:KFoss@downtowndesmoines.com). The winter markets vendor spots are full in these categories – jams, baked goods & jewelry. But Kelly is looking for farmers that sell turkey, meat, eggs and produce.

**IA Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference** – January 27 – 29 at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines.

## Reminders:

1. Since we have so many new farmers, remember that you cannot ring up a sale for another vendor. You could lose your Food Stamp certification and be terminated from the Wireless Project.
2. Since you are paying for the commercial transaction fees, be sure to keep track of what you are paying so you can use those expenses as a tax deduction.
3. You cannot set a minimum purchase amount. If an EBT household wishes to purchase \$.50 in onions, you do need to process the transaction. Same for any debit or credit transaction.
4. Hot foods and hot drinks (cocoa, coffee, and tea) cannot be purchased with SNAP EBT benefits.
5. If your machine quits working, be sure to call Tracy right away! Or if you need help during the weekend, you can call 1-888-848-6825 phone number on the side of your machine.
6. Call Kim if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.
7. The second battery that we provide to you was purchased by DHS. If you ever need to return your wireless machine, be sure to keep one battery, carrying case and signs.

8. **Charge your batteries before market.** You should always have a charged battery, ready to go for market. If a battery is not holding a charge, contact Kim for a replacement.
10. Please make sure to keep the original box that your machine came in as it contains the Sim card, which is needed to identify your machine if you have to call TMS.

## Help Desk

**We are here to help you!**

**When you have questions about:**

- **Participating in the Wireless project or reimbursement questions? Call Tracy Penick at 515-281-4935.**
- **What you can sell to EBT customers, or being authorized to accept EBT? Call USDA/FNS at 515-284-4035.**
- **Food Assistance eligibility? Call Tom Wakefield at 515-281-6820.**
- **Supplies – call Kim Jones at (515) 281-5410**